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As I saw no reason to believe this story, I declined to comply with the proposal of Casimiro, who, having consoled himself by begging a little coffee, took his departure, and the encampment was reduced to the toldo, of which I was to consider myself an inmate, and another, belonging to the only Indians who remained—Tankelow, Orkeke's brother, and his son, a youth of about eighteen. Besides these, there were three of the Chilian deserters who as narrated had escaped from Punta Arena; one was attached to the household of Tankelow, and the other two to that of Orkeke. One of these was Arica, already mentioned, who being a very clever worker in hide, had employed himself in adorning saddles and bridles for the Indians, by which he had acquired a pretty good stock of gear. The condition of all three was, however, not enviable. They had lowered themselves at first by volunteering to discharge the drudgery of fetching wood and water, and by this time were little better than slaves, obliged to perform the menial offices, which before had been the task of the women. These fair creatures, headed by Mrs. Orkeke—a young woman almost six feet in height, and displaying a corresponding breadth across the shoulders—employed themselves in cutting out and sewing guanaco mantles, weaving fillets for the head, and chattering. Tankelow and his son presently started for a hunt; but as I was not offered a mount, and deemed it more reasonable to give my only charger a good rest and feed, I could only accompany them to the river, the frozen surface of which they crossed, and disappeared up a cañon that led up the barranca, on the northern limit of the valley, to the Upper Pampa. Having wistfully watched them, I reconnoitred the valley of the Rio Chico. Behind me, to the south-east, the river wound through plains covered with withered coarse grass, some eighteen inches high, extending on either bank for several miles till terminated by the rising barranca. Snow lay here and there in patches on some of the higher ground, and increased the dreariness of the prospect. Almost

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with a bodkin, and sewn to the hide with sinew. The anvils and hammers for working silver are generally stones implements; flints, however, are only used by the men for procuring fire. The Tehuelches are also very handy workers in iron, and will fashion a knife, or even an adze, out of any piece of metal procured by theft, commerce in the colonies, or from wrecks on the coast. One of the knives frequently used in the latter part of my journey was formed out of one blade of an old pair of scissors forged for me by Hinchel.

Their tools for working silver, iron, wood, &c., consist of files, known by the expressive name of 'Khikerikkh,' or perhaps a rasp, an occasional saw, an axe, the inevitable small adze (fig. 6), a pair of scissors, or an old chisel. Many of these have been obtained from shipwrecks on the coast, others by barter in the settlements.

The women's most important occupation in camp was the making up of skin mantles, which merits a full description.

The skins are first dried in the sun, being pegged down with thorns of the algarroba tree. When dry they are taken up, and scraped with pieces of flint, agate, obsidian, or sometimes glass, fixed into a [illegible] handle (fig. 7). They are then smeared over with grease and liver kneaded into pulp, after which they are softened in the hand until quite pliable, when they are placed on the ground and cut with a small, very sharp knife into pieces, dovetailed so as to fit one into the other, in order to secure strength of seam, and parcelled out amongst a party of four or six women, with a corresponding quantity of needles and thread, consisting of bodkins formed out of sharpened nails, and dried sinews from the back of the adult guanaco. A whole mantle is never sewn together at once, but when one half is finished it is pegged out and the paint applied to it thus. The surface is slightly damped, and each woman takes a cake or piece of red ochre, if the ground is to be red, and, keeping it damp, lays the paint on with great care. When the ground is finished, the pattern of small black spots and blue

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294 531 and yellow lines is painted with the greatest exactness, the women working all day with the most assiduous industry. When completed it is left for a night to dry, and the other half and wings, which serve in lieu of sleeves, are duly completed, and subsequently all are joined together, presenting, when finished, an unbroken surface of fur. The most favourite pattern (except when the wearer is in mourning) is a red ground with small black crosses and blue and yellow longitudinal lines for borders, or with a zigzag of white, blue, and red. The untiring energy with which the women work, 462 and the rapidity with which they sew, are astonishing. When a man is married, his wife, or wives, of course manufacture his mantles, assisted by their friends, whom they help in their turn; but should he be a bachelor, as in my unfortunate case, [437] he gives out his skins to a fair lady, who works like other people I have heard of—on half-profits, and the hunter generally loses by the bargain; at least such was my experience, some thirty or forty skins only producing a mantle containing about one-third their number. Besides the guanaco 291 mantles which are most generally worn, others are made 437 from the skins of the fox, puma, wild cat, cavy, and skunk; the fur of the latter and of the wild cat are the most valuable, but, like the others, are generally intended only for barter. 462 The women, besides making mantles, weave the fillets for the [244] head previously mentioned, from threads of unravelled stuff obtained in barter at the settlements, or from their Araucanian neighbours. They work on the same principle as [286] that on which a sailor constructs a sword mat. Besides these fillets, they occasionally weave scarves for the waist, and garters. Many of them also work in the minor details of [326] silver ornaments, such as hollowing out or bending the studs, boring the holes, and stitching them on to the belts or armour, as the case may be. They also sew the skins [281] together for the coverings of the toldos, which is very laborious work. They scrape and dress horse-hides for the furniture of the bed-places, painting them in various pat-

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401 years old, would be a prodigy among them, — a miracle of genius.

291 An opportunity was afforded, while in camp, to see some specimens of their tailoring or mantua-making achievements; — either term is appropriate, as the male and female dress do not differ in form, and but slightly in the mode of adjustment. The mantle or blanket is worn around the shoulders; those of the women are fastened together by the corners under the chin with a stick for a pin; the men hold theirs around them with their hands, except that when hunting they tie a string around the wrist.

281 The skins of young guanaco are selected for mantles, on account of the superior fineness and softness of the hair. Nearly a dozen skins are used for a single mantle, as a large part of each is esteemed unfit for use, and thrown away. The skins, while green, are stretched to their utmost tension on the ground to dry. When partially dried, they are scraped on the inside with a stone sharpened like a gun-flint, sprinkled the while with water, to facilitate the operation. When the surface is made tolerably smooth, and of a pretty uniform thickness, it is actively scoured with a coarse-grained stone, till it has a bright polish. The skin is again dried, then crumpled and twisted in the hands till it becomes perfectly soft and pliable. The thread, as has been stated, is made from the sinews of the ostrich. These are extracted by the exertion of great strength, and divided into strings about the size of ordinary shoe-thread. They are then twisted, the ends are scraped to a point, and when dry become stiff; they are now ready for use.

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Two pieces of skin are cut to fit each other. The tailoress (for all the work, from the curing of the skins to the last results, is done by the squaws) holds the edges together with the left hand, and drills them for sewing with a sharpened nail, held between the first two fingers of the right hand; the pointed thread, held between the finger and thumb, is inserted and drawn through, and so the work goes on. The stitches are tolerably fine, and a very neat seam is made. Other pieces are added, and when the whole is finished the seams are rubbed smooth with a bone. The fur being worn inside, there remains the work of outside decoration. With a due quantity of clay, blood, charcoal and grease, amalgamated for the purpose, the artist arms herself with a stick for a brush, and executes divers figures in black, on a red ground; which if intended to shadow forth men, require a vigorous imagination to detect the purpose. They might pass for unhappy ghosts (if a little more ethereal in composition), or for deformed trees. They bear a rude resemblance to a chair in profile, or a figure 4; and are thickly disposed over the whole surface, in the attitude sometimes vulgarly termed "spoon-fashion." The garment is now complete; the edges are carefully trimmed with a knife, and the fabric is thrown over the shoulders, with the infallible certainty of fitting as closely as the native tastes require. There is no trial of patience in smoothing obstinate wrinkles. A "genteel fit" is the easiest thing in the world; wherein Patagonian tailors have decidedly the advantage of their fellow-craftsmen in civilised lands.